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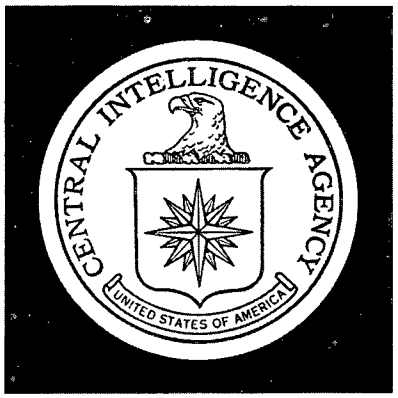

The President's Daily Brief

~~*Top Secret*~~ *11 March 1968*

[redacted] 3.5(c)

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DAILY BRIEF
11 MARCH 1968

1. Laos

The Communists have overrun vital portions of the important guerrilla base at Phou Pha Thi, 3.3(h)(2)

Some of the American personnel have been successfully evacuated. Reports are still fragmentary. 3.3(h)(2)

2. South Vietnam

A new anti-Communist popular front was formally launched yesterday at a large rally in Saigon. Some 2,000 delegates were present, representing a broad spectrum of the country's political and religious groups.

The event was marred somewhat, however, by the absence of several prominent politicians who had initially lent their support. Other leaders are giving the new group only lukewarm backing because they suspect it is being used as a vehicle for the political ambitions of Vice President Ky or of its chairman, Senator Tran Van Don.

3. Soviet Union 3.3(h)(2)

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4. Panama

The showdown may come today. The National Assembly is scheduled to meet at 5:00 EST this afternoon and is prepared to indict Robles and set the stage for his impeachment.

To prevent this, Robles is said to have decided to order General Vallarino to keep the assembly from meeting. If Vallarino complies, Arnulfo Arias is likely to respond by calling his followers into the streets. If, on the other hand, Vallarino defies the President, he will be subject to dismissal. But that is an academic point; the National Guard would most likely seize the government.

A last ditch effort is afoot to work out a compromise, but there is no sign of give in either camp. Robles is emboldened by Arias' failure thus far to bring out a truly massive outpouring of followers.

5. Poland

Student rioting in Warsaw on Saturday was even uglier than on the day before. More may come. The students seemed to have the sympathy of watching Warsaw citizens who openly criticized the harsh police tactics.

Gomulka's efforts to end the outbreaks are hampered by rising factionalism in the upper echelons of his party.

6. Cyprus

Reaction has been generally favorable on Cyprus to Makarios' removal of restrictions on the movement of Turkish Cypriots. The Turks, though wary of a Makarios trick, are saying that the action could bring movement toward easing of communal tensions. Prospects are still dim, however, for any real settlement soon.

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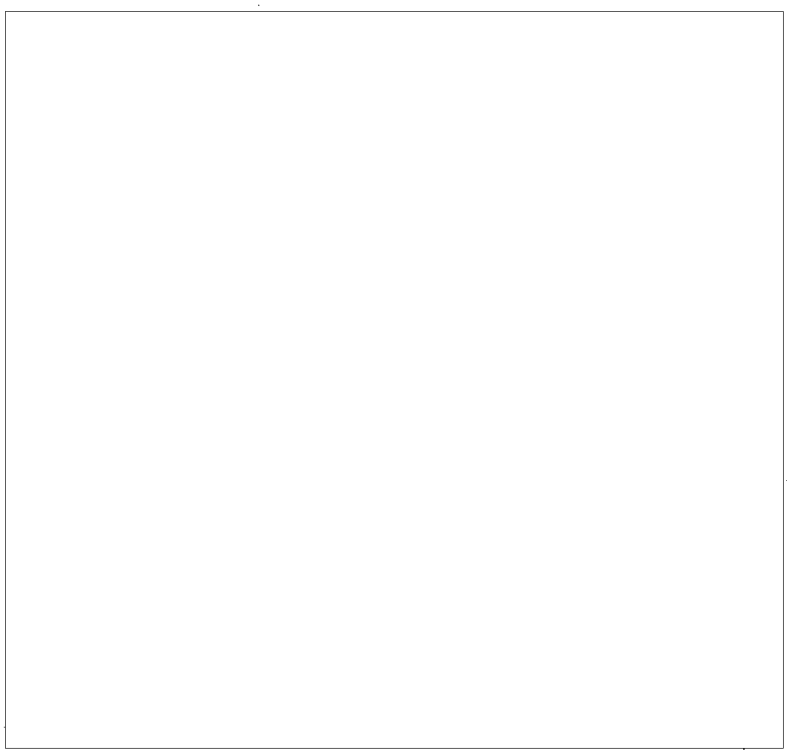
7. Common Market



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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam

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16

11 March 1968

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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

11 March 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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[redacted]

* * *

Medical Problems: A senior Swedish Red Cross official has told the US mission in Geneva that the Russian Red Cross has asked for urgent and large shipments of first aid kits, medicine, medical equipment, and textiles for clothing to North Vietnam. A Russian Red Cross official was quoted as saying that there had been a breakdown both in hospital systems and medical treatment in North Vietnam.

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From talking with the Russian, the Swedish official got the impression that conditions in North Vietnam are much worse than Hanoi is admitting. The Russian said Hanoi does not want the outside world to know how bad things are; "the Soviets therefore are moving in to help."

A hint as to the possible real motives behind the Soviet approach came in some supporting "evidence" shown the Swede by the Russian Red Cross official. After claiming that many hospitals had been destroyed in North Vietnam, the Russian displayed a photograph of a large building with a red cross on its roof which had been hit. The Russian also had some pictures of wounded civilians. The photographs are being distributed to various national Red Cross societies.

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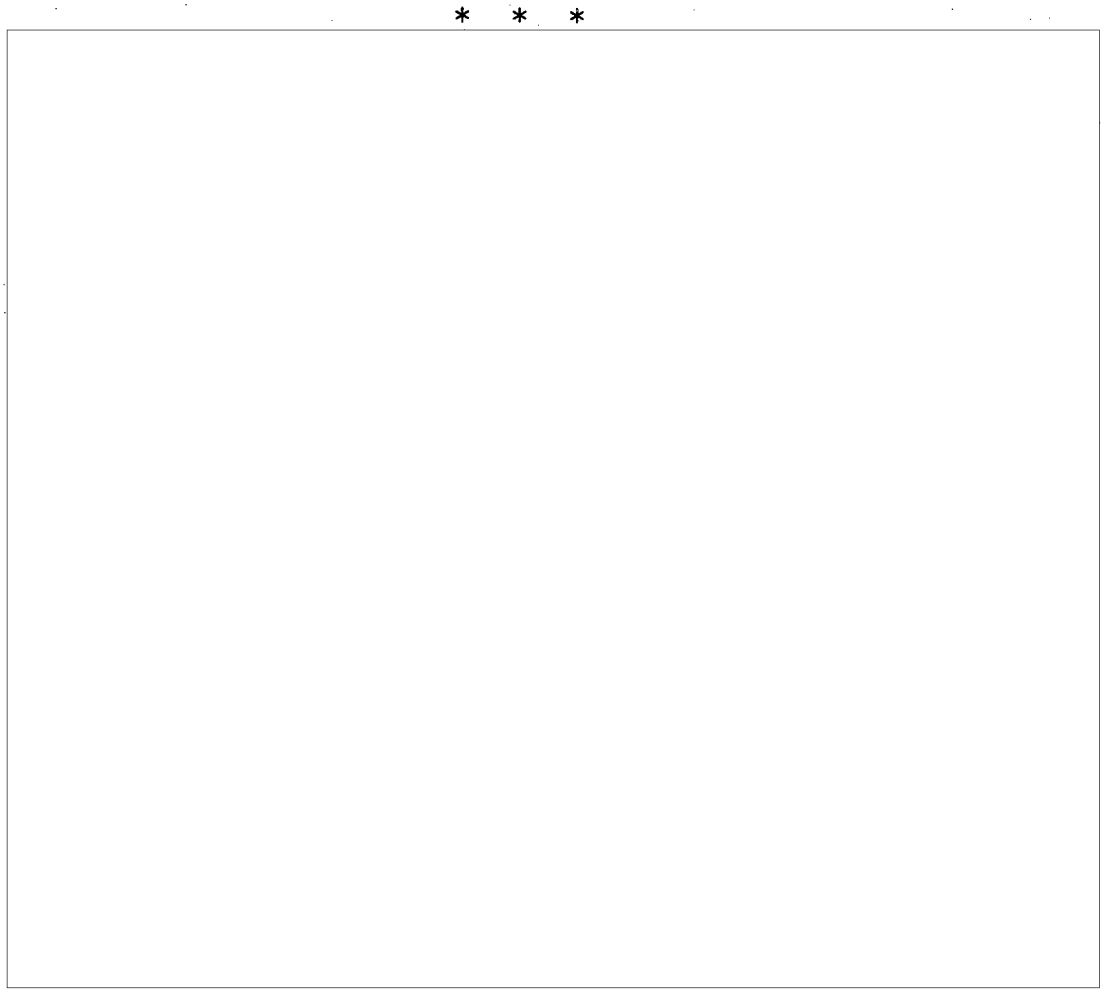

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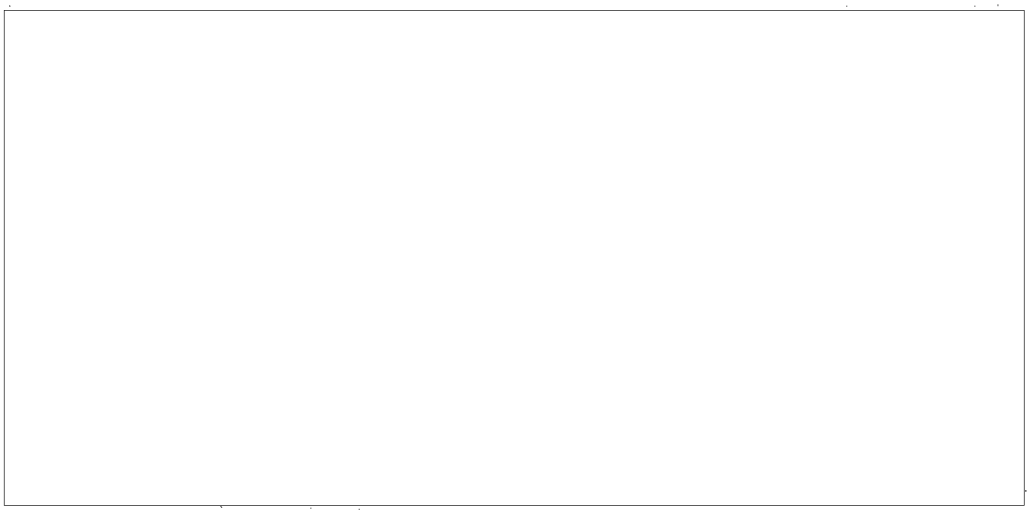

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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